

**PAUL ROBESON**  
**LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL**  
The Historic May 9, 1958 Concert



72020 - 2  
STEREO

**PAUL ROBESON  
LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL  
Alan Booth Piano**

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|---|--------|
| 1. Every Time I Feel the Spirit (arr. L. Brown)   | (1:48) |
| 2. Balm in Gilead (arr. Burleigh)                 | (2:15) |
| 3. Volga Boat Song                                | (3:12) |
| 4. Shakespeare: Monologue from "Othello"          | (2:45) |
| 5. Alexandrov: O Thou Silent Night                | (2:30) |
| 6. Chinese Children's Song                        | (1:32) |
| 7. Clutsam: My Curly Headed Baby                  | (2:30) |
| 8. Kern: Old Man River                            | (2:15) |
| 9. Dvorak: Going Home (arr. Fisher)               | (4:46) |
| 10. Mussorgsky: Monologue from "Boris Godunov"    | (4:19) |
| 11. Mussorgsky: The Orphan                        | (1:55) |
| 12. Bach: Christ lag in Todesbanden               | (3:15) |
| 13. Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel (arr. L. Brown) | (1:25) |
| 14. Schubert: Lullaby                             | (3:02) |
| 15. O No John (arr. Sharp)                        | (2:20) |
| 16. Robinson: Joe Hill                            | (2:25) |
| 17. Jacob's Ladder                                | (3:00) |
| 18. Chassidic Chant (arr. Engel)                  | (5:55) |
| 19. Freedom (arr. Smetana)                        | (2:10) |
| 20. O Grieve You Now My Mother                    | (1:23) |
| 21. This Is The Hammer (arr. L. Brown)            | (1:55) |
| 22. Beethoven: All Men Are Brothers               | (2:17) |
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Paul Robeson • Live at Carnegie Hall

VANGUARD

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Produced for Compact Disc by M. Scott Mampe and James J. Frey  
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This recording presents the major part of the memorable recital given by Paul Robeson at Carnegie Hall in New York on May 9, 1958. It was his first appearance there in eleven years. Manifestly a host of concert-goers had not forgotten the magnificent resonance of his voice and the vital flame of his interpretations of song. Every seat was taken and the audience gave the singer an ovation. In response to overwhelming demand, he gave another recital on May 23.

The voice of course is unique. Earlier in the year Thomas Albright had written in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Paul Robeson returned to the Bay area concert scene Sunday afternoon and proved the years had done nothing to the greatest natural basso voice of the present generation." But the rare quality he brings to his rendition of song is more than sheer voice. It is the product of a personality that has ranged far beyond the confines of music, and brought a wealth of intangible experiences back to the music which he performs. Thus, as important in his career as the art of music has been the art of the stage, and if his speaking voice shows the timbre of a great singer, his singing also shows the ability to create a living, dramatic portrait that marks a great actor.

The capacity for many-sided interests has been characteristic of Paul Robeson from his early years. He was born on April 9, 1898 in Princeton, New Jersey, where his father, who had escaped from slavery in 1860, was pastor of the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. At Rutgers University, Paul broke one of the myths of college life by becoming both a brilliant student and All-American end of the football team of 1917-18. He graduated with honors, including a Phi Beta Kappa key. Columbia University came next, and the study of law, in which he received his degree in 1922. Then a new activity beckoned, that of the theatre. And typical of Robeson is that he found himself in the midst of a group that was the most serious and artistically enterprising in American dramatic life. That was the Provincetown Players, the spiritual father of what is now known as the "Off-Broadway" theatre, and which was then beginning to give the public its first inkling of the genius of Eugene O'Neill. In 1924 Robeson became the inevitable choice for the leading role in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, and the American stage discovered that it had in Robeson one of its very great

actors. A year later he again triumphed in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*.

The passage of years has made little change in the drama of a Robeson recital. Irving Kolodin wrote in the *Saturday Review* on the May 9 concert, "The voice which has been his professional asset for singing, speaking, or acting over a full thirty-five year span is still potent...Robeson remains a man of magnificent vocal endowments with a highly cultivated sense of phrase and accent, a power of articulation second to none among his contemporaries." Harriett Johnson of the *New York Post* reported, "The dignity of Robeson himself, left its unforgettable mark." A short time after the concert Robeson left for England, where he had been invited to act Othello again at the Stratford-on-Avon festival. The English people received him as an old friend. His first public appearance there was on a national television program, of which the *London Times* wrote, "It is some years since we last saw Mr. Robeson and we find with relief that he is one of those whom age shows no signs of withering...He still talks to us quietly and good naturedly, and breaks into a smile that is the quintessence of friendliness; he still sings with a huge delight in his songs...This was a half hour with a fine and thoughtful artist."

Singing "with a huge delight in his songs" is an apt description of Paul Robeson's manner. The songs he chooses range widely over many lands and styles, but have certain qualities in common. A song to him must be a genuine human experience, made up of words and music in close collaboration. The words of the song must ring true as well as the music. The kind of melodic writing which he feels most deeply is that which is near to and seems to grow out of the inflections of speech. The songs presented on his program all share these characteristics. Also included and the critics united in saying that it was one of the high points of the May 9 program—is his reading of a monologue from *Othello*. It is Othello's last speech, in which, with the whole structure of his life collapsing, he recalls the days of glory when he had defended Venice so successfully against its enemies, and on the words, "I smote the infidel thus," stabs himself.

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